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# Woman's Union Missionary Society.

## A FIRST STEP.

THIS is a period when in our land, pioneers and discoverers are being honored. Many brave sailors, and gallant ships, have followed Columbus across the sea, but we honor him as the first to point the way to a new world, and to take possession of it in the name of Christ. Thus it is fitting to recall the past of our *Union Society*, and do honor to those brave pioneers in *Woman's Missions*, who in the face of indifference and incredulity, first found a way into this new world of Missionary achievement.

The year 1834 forms an epoch in the history of heathen women, for then Rev. David Abeel, returning from his mission in China, via England, first presented in London, their claims on the sympathies and labors of Christian women, resulting in the organization of an association called *The Society for Promoting*

*Female Education in the East.* The history of this Society forms the most enduring monument, of the godly advocate for the elevation of heathen women.

The same year, in New York, he pleaded the woes of this debased and enslaved sex, for which no adequate remedy had yet been suggested. But foreign missions were in their infancy in our land, and the leaders of Missionary Boards deemed an independent movement premature. This germ of a *woman's mission to woman* was, however, not forgotten by Mrs. T. C. Doremus, whose consecrated heart had been fired to enthusiasm by her personal friendship with Dr. Abeel.

Twenty-six years later, as a manager in the Female Bible Society of New York, she listened to the stirring words of Mrs. Francis B. Mason, a missionary from Burmah, appealing to that organization for the employment of Christian Bible Readers in heathen lands. The circumscribed work of that association, rendered any official co-operation in this direction impossible, but Mrs. Doremus then determined that nothing should hinder a response to this second appeal. An independent undenominational society to send out single women to the East, conducted by unsalaried officers, was organized in the Fall of 1860, under the title of the WOMAN'S UNION MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF AMERICA FOR HEATHEN LANDS. Nine ladies in Boston had previously formed a society for the same purpose, became an auxiliary, and zealous gifted women in Brooklyn worked side by side with those in New York, in the new organization incor-

porated February, 1861. Mrs. Doremus was chosen its first President, continuing her arduous labors for eighteen years. No one could have been better fitted as a leader in this delicate and difficult enterprise; for her supreme faith and indomitable courage, her enthusiasm for missions, dating from childhood, her wide experience combined with tireless energy and purpose, and her extensive acquaintance and influence; all her varied resources were devoted to the interests of this frail little bark, launched on tempestuous seas of opposition and unbelief.

Among many original methods of arousing interest, children were organized into Mission Bands at an early day, the first one, still in existence, bearing the suggestive name of PIONEER.

The *Philadelphia* Branch, formed May, 1861, became the first advocate and champion of women physicians, opening a new field for medical missions, now recognized as a most important factor, in reaching heathen women, doomed by the tyranny of ages to neglect and misery.

The ZENANA work for the secluded women of India, which had never been brought before the Christian public of America, was the distinguishing feature of the new organization.

Such in brief was the origin of this *Union Society*, whose later history and present standing are known. The wisdom and far-reaching faith of its founders have been proved, not alone by its results in heathen lands, but also by its effects in America. Some of its distinctive features have been adopted by all denominational Missionary Boards and local societies of women

for the advancement of the questions of the day, have followed in the train of this *first organized effort of women* to conduct labors of magnitude and importance.

In view of the present efforts to further a more united Church of Christ, is it too much to hope that the *Woman's Union Missionary Society*, whose sole aim is to spread the name of Jesus, may win to its support thousands of consecrated women, who owe all in this life and the next, to the Gospel which alone has elevated and honored women?

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OFFICERS OF THE WOMAN'S UNION MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

MRS. HENRY JOHNSON, *President.*

MISS S. D. DOREMUS, *Corresponding Secretary,*

MISS ELIZABETH STONE, *Assistant Treasurer.*

THE MISSIONARY LINK, issued monthly, 50 cents a year, the only organ of the Society; may be obtained at

Mission Room, 67 Bible House, New York City.